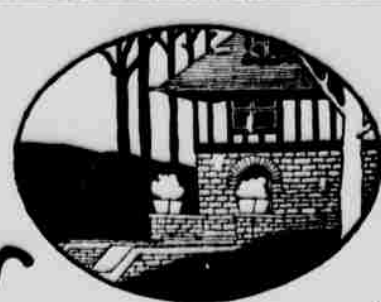


THE HOME CIRCLE PAGE

EDITED BY LILIAN CRAIGEN ADAMS



Bought Herself a Trousseau

And Then the Spinster Lady Did Not Care That She Had No Bridegroom.

THE spinster lady had reached the age of fifty years that morning, and it was a sorrowful morning to her.

"If I had only realized how young I was at forty-nine I should certainly have been more frisky than I was last year," said she to herself, grimly. And just at that psychological moment, when she would have mourned if left to herself, the ball of the telephone rang and she had to postpone her tears to answer.



"I'll buy myself a trousseau," said she.

cause you did not marry is no reason why you should not have your share of wedding presents. You have given lots of wedding presents, you should receive a few at least whether you marry or whether you do not. I am, therefore, sending you this morning two silver candlesticks and a gold-framed triple mirror, which represent the amount of money I should have expended on you had you seen fit to wed some nice man. Good-bye Emily, and many happy returns of the day."

At this the spinster laughed until she cried, having a sense of humor. Then as the responsibility of having a fiftieth birthday began to dawn upon her again and she threatened to grow melancholy an inspiration seized her. "I'll buy myself a trousseau," said she, "that's what I will do, I'll buy myself a trousseau."

And she did. She drew out of the savings bank the money which long ago she had put in for just such a purpose and which recently she had thought of devoting to foreign missions, and she went out to the shops and indulged in the most blissful orgy of shopping any woman ever had. She bought herself pink lingerie and fluffy peignoirs, and boudoir capes trimmed with tiny roses, and high-heeled mules all brocaded and dainty—all the things in fact which the most extravagant bride buys for her outfit. Then she went home tired and happy.

"I am fifty years old and don't look it," said she to herself that night as she unpacked her treasure, "and I have a lovely trousseau and some very handsome wedding presents. All that is missing is the bridegroom, and since it is agreed by all authorities that he is the least part of every wedding, I am not missing anything by his absence. He would probably drink anyway. To have all of the advantages and none of the disadvantages of matrimony is what I call being strictly lucky."

And after this she went to sleep quite cheerfully and did not bother a bit about the fact that she had passed the half-century mark.

The NEW YEAR'S RECEPTION

And How It Is Now Numbered Among The Feasts Which Are Not.

AS that New Year's day is now merely a post-climax, a sort of uninteresting appendage of Christmas. Time was when it was as important a feast as the year boasted. Time was when New Year's Day offered attractions looked forward to for weeks by young persons of both sexes.

The ladies of the family were astir early on New Year's Day, then, getting the house ready for the horde of visitors expected. Their preparation con-

firming you do look in pink; my favorite color, pink." And it was, "This is quite the prettiest group of ladies we have seen, and we have already been to twenty places."

Friendly remarks made in the kindest spirit, you see. And then to the dining room where libations were drunk to each divinity present and a bit of sandwich nibbled—and on again to pay respects to other fair ones.

At the next place, no doubt, it was "And oh Miss Mary, how charming you look in blue; my favorite color, blue." And then to go on.

And oh, the good things that were found on those dining room tables! Smithfield hams done to a turn, turkey, brown as a bun; fried oysters, chicken salad, beaten biscuits—all of the delicacies which heart could wish or imagination suggest.

As for the ladies who for some reason or other were prevented from receiving on New Year's Day, they coyly hung a basket upon the doorbell and from behind closed shutters watched with pleased interest the gallants who came riding up to leave their cards in that receptacle.

Ah, those were indeed the good old times, the romantic times, the interesting times, just as these are the prosaic ones. For now the New Year's reception is out of date, and few persons trouble even to hang the basket on the door; that outward and visible sign of an inward but invisible presence. No longer do groups of gentlemen start out briskly in the morning to end up at midnight frayed as to digestion; sometimes uncertain as to speech.

We begin our New Year's more soberly in these days, sewing shirts for soldiers, or in bed to recuperate from the exertions of the night before, occupations neither as pleasant nor as picturesque as the old-time reception, whatever may have been the defects of the latter.

A new way to clean silver without strenuous rubbing is furnished by a clever housewife. Let the silver soak all the morning in a pan of sour milk. Wash in warm water to which half a teaspoonful of ammonia has been added, and rub lightly with a clean chambray cloth. You will find the silver beautifully bright.



And about twelve o'clock the callers began to arrive.

sisted largely in loading the tables in the dining room until they groaned with good things to eat of all sorts and in hanging the mistletoe invitingly upon the chandelier.

Then they dressed themselves in their very best, and grouped themselves in the drawing room as gracefully as possible to await the front door bell's ringing. And about twelve o'clock the callers began to arrive. Gentlemen of all sorts and conditions stood irreproachably in what were then known as Prince Albert coats, in gray spats, in silk hats, with canes, with boutonnières, with a swagger.

After this the excitement was intense. And it was, "Miss Agatha, how

blue," but these faithless utterances were never revealed because no one remembered the next day what anyone else had said, which may have been because of the confusion or which may have been because of the libations, as you are charitable or suspicious.

At all events the cards of the visitors were jealously saved by the hostess and counted later, and thereafter there was rivalry between neighbors as to the number of gentlemen which each had "received." It was no unusual thing for 150 men to call at a single house, to drink up a small-sized ocean of eggnog and apple toddy, to devour five bursting turkey gobblers,

THE YOUNG HOUSEKEEPER SAYS

quarters of an hour before the beef is done the pudding should be mixed and poured into the pan under the meat. The recipe for the pudding is as follows: One pint of milk, four eggs well-beaten, two cups of flour, one teaspoonful of salt. When meat and pudding are done cut the latter into squares and serve on the platter around the beef.

THAT cabbage cooked à la française will make a nice change in the diet. Boil the cabbage fifteen minutes, shred coarsely, and put in a deep baking dish. Pour over this a cream sauce, or a sauce made of two tablespoonfuls of melted butter, a scant teaspoonful of salt, a dash of pepper, and four tablespoonfuls of cream. Sprinkle

with cheese and bake half an hour. THAT as a change from the perpetual apple and celery salad so often on the menu of the private family the young housekeeper recommends apple and date salad. Have an equal quantity of apples cut in cubes and of dates cut in bits, mix and serve on lettuce leaves with a mayonnaise dressing. If a little lemon juice is poured over the apples as soon as they are cut it will not only improve their taste, but keep them from becoming discolored.

THAT in the preparation of left-overs some ingenuity and a little imagination are as much needed as a cook book. An eatable salad may be made of almost any combination of vegetables found in the refrigerator, if served daintily on lettuce with a highly flavored dressing of some sort. Cold meats combined with celery and nut meats are delicious. String beans with stuffed olives and mayonnaise are good, and peas with carrots. New dishes are made by experimentation, with necessity as the reason behind, and the housewife should use her own brains as well as someone's else, the young housekeeper thinks.

Never, it is declared, were men so scarce as now.



SEASONABLE JOTTINGS

WELCOME 1916! May you be the happiest and most prosperous year any of us have ever known.

Do your resolutions early; it is to be hoped it will not be necessary to do it often.

Gift horses having been looked in the mouth and in many cases found wanting, the procession to the exchange desks in the shops will start early tomorrow morning.

The next treat to look forward to is the exhibition of spring styles, and even while the snow flies filmy materials will be shown in shop windows to evoke the spirit of the coming summer girl.

Meanwhile have you seen anything like the amount of fur which the winter girl succeeds in piling upon her small person?

If you do not skate you are miles behind the times. Better consultations of the brain than to be out of the vogue.

Now you will begin to hear the old, old story of the pin-cushion which, given to a second cousin two Christmases ago, found its way back to its original owner this year by way of a great-aunt.

Is Santa Claus a villain or a hero to you today?

Good-bye old year. You weren't such a bad 'un, after all, as years go.

The Townbreds and their Country Place

By Edward Riddle Padgett

On New Year's Eve

IT was New Year's Eve—at Five Oaks, the Townbreds' country place. All day it had been snowing, adding a fresh coat to that which had lain, soiled and frozen hard, for nearly a week. Drifts were piled high against corners of buildings and along the roadside, and the merry jingle of sleigh bells could be heard from far and near.

As Mr. Townbred, home from his daily toil in the city, left the trolley at the Little Five Oaks station and started along the path to his house, he was thinking of many things.

In town, the cafes would be gay and friendly; music, dancing, the exhilarating popping of corks and the jolly company of friends at nearby tables—a New Year's Eve in the city! Mr. Townbred ploughed on through the snow, almost knee deep. It was cold, and the stars were just beginning to appear, frosty and clear. A turn in the path and he saw before him—his home.

Well back from the road, under the giant, snow-decked limbs of huge oak and chestnut trees it nestled, with a thin spiral of smoke floating up from the kitchen chimney. The lamps were lit, and the soft light streamed out through the windows and was reflected on the drifts of snow.

Alone, it seemed, in a world of snow and trees and open fields. And yet, there was something cheerful about it, something inviting, snug and warm. And he found it so within. Dinner was ready, hot, appetizing, satisfying. Mrs. Townbred welcomed him joyously, and Mutt, their little Cuban poodle, danced about in high glee. The faithful wood-burner in one corner of the dining room was blazing away, and the lamp on the table shed its mellow glow over white napery and polished silver.

"There's going to be a big time in town tonight," said Mr. Townbred, as he carved the roast.

"I suppose so—in the cafes, you mean?" replied Mrs. Townbred.

"Yes. Seems as though everybody we know is booked for a New Year party. Jones and Wilkins and Brown—and at least a dozen more fellows. I know asked me to bring you in and join them in their celebration. Mrs. Tompkins even called up and invited us to remain all night with them, after the New Year had been properly welcomed in the cafe where they always reserve a table. I told her it was too long a trip in—and she said that I served us right and that

is what we get for living in the country."

Mrs. Townbred smiled, a little wistfully. "Are you sure you don't mind, Ruthvin?" she asked.

"Of course not—say, Frieda, for goodness sake send this knife up to the village to be sharpened! This meat isn't tough but—no indeed, I really don't mind. We can have our own quiet little New Year celebration right here, my dear, and—"

"There's a Watch-night Service in the village church," said Mrs. Townbred. "And, if you're willing, Ruthvin, I believe I'd like to go."

"A Watch-night Service? What is that?"

"A prayer and song service to

watch the old year out and the New Year in, my dear."

Mr. Townbred smiled rather shamefacedly. "Goodness!" he exclaimed with mock surprise. "Do they still have them? I remember going as a boy, but—I'm afraid since then my observances of New Year's Eve have been quite different, in recent years at least."

"Everyone is going," continued Mrs. Townbred. "It is a solemn occasion,

harnessed to the sleigh and the Townbreds, bundled in furs and with bells a-jingle, set out for the village church, a few miles distant.

The night was wonderful. Clear and cold and crisp, with a wintry moon sailing majestically in the star-studded heavens and throwing an eerie light over field and woodland and open road.

Presently they met up with other sleighs, similarly bound and filled with

friends who already were calling out "Happy New Year!" to each other.

Sleighs, in fact, seemed to be coming from all directions. Just over the brow of a hill the little village church beamed a cheery welcome to the travelers.

The service was an old-time one, with song and prayer. The old minister, grown gray in his long years of sacrifice and struggle, besought Providence in homely speech for a New Year of promise and blessing—the crops, the welfare of the community, good health and clean living, happiness and more love toward God and man, a cessation of the war in Europe and the blessing of peace and Christianity. The little organ in the corner

of the church played a hymn, and the choir sang a hymn, and the minister prayed, and the people sang, and the service was over.

Then came the last few minutes before the death of the old year and the birth of the new. In everyone kneeling in silent prayer, the minutes ticked by the old patriarch in the pulpit watching them, minute by minute, on the face of his plump, worn, key-winder watch that had timed his sermons, his appointments for prayer-

meetings, Sunday school, marriages and funerals for so many long, weary years.

Then—it came! At one minute past midnight, he rose to his feet.

"The New Year has come, friends," he said, quite simply. "And I wish you all a happy New Year."

And such a babble of sound as broke forth! Everyone greeted everyone else. "Happy New Year!" was flung from one end of the room to the other. The small boys blew their horns and spun their rattles, and up in the belfry the sexton was pealing forth the glad tidings.

Followed an hour in the Townbred school room, where the Townbreds met many more of the people living round about them. Then the cold, sleepy horses were unhitched from the long, rail hitching-post and, one by one, the New Year merry-makers left for their homes.

Riding back over the hard-frozen road, with Old Bob straining at his bit to get to his warm stable, Mr. Townbred spoke.

"I'm glad I went, Frieda," he said. "It did me good. But what a difference from other New Year Eves I've spent! Gee, I can just see Jones and Brown and the Tompkinses and all the rest of them about now—and they think they're having the time of their lives! But the next morning—"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Townbred slowly. "Yes, this is better—far better. Do you know, Ruthvin, there's something so wholesome and clean about living out in the open country—that they think they're having the time of their lives! But the next morning—"

"It does," agreed Mr. Townbred soberly. "Come on, giddap, Bob!" (Copyright, 1915, by Edward Riddle Padgett.)



The Townbreds, bundled in furs and with bells a-jingle, set out for the village church.

Little Fables of the Business World

"Swearin' Off"

HERE was once a certain Young Man who decided to Do as Everybody Else does on New Year's—but not to do as they do six days later. To wit—he'd resolve a few Resolutions and Make 'em Stick.

Whether he did or not is Another Yarn, for the Six Days haven't Slipped by as yet. The chances are, since he's Human, he'll be a nifty little Backslider. If he isn't it's a Miracle.

However, this said, said Chronicle hath to do with his Swearin' Off Process—proving thereby, also, that Our Hero is a very Human Hombre. All set? Very well, Tambo, shoed!

Yase, this chap could have decided to Give the Go-by to such things as

meetings, Sunday school, marriages and funerals for so many long, weary years.

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trying to Keep Up with the War News with a Gazetteer, or Symphony Concerts, or going to see Mary Pickford, or even staying in his room on a Saturday Night. He could have Picked Out a few Resolutions of that sort.

But he was a Serious Lad and he wanted to Do It Right. So he fastened on Something Hard. He resolved to Tin-Can the Smokes, Which is to say that On and After the stroke of Midnight on the 31st day of December he and the Fragrant Weed would pass by and Not Speak.

All that he mind you, happened a few days before Christmas. Which, he figured, would give him time to Get Used to It, to Go into Training as it were, before the Bell Rang.

And by way of Practice he would frequently lead himself right up to a Show-Window where a few hundred "Dusky Beauties," as E. K. White called them, were staring him in the Face. He'd look 'em back, too, right Between the Eyes with a Stony Stare. And after a while he even Got So he could Thumb his Nose at 'em before Lighting the One Cigar he'd allowed himself—Reduced Rations—before dinner.

Then, along came Christmas. And Our Hero swore softly. There was a Reason: Friend Al came across with a Box of his choice Smokes.

The Home-folks included a few of Father's Favorites in their Christmas Package.

The Boss left a Box of Fifty-Centers on his desk Christmas Eve.

And she, being a practical sort, let Appearances and Conventions go, hang said "Merry Christmas!" to him with a box of Cigars selected because of the Lavender Ribbon around them.

It was Up Against It! It seemed like Somebody was trying to Rub It In!

You can't do anything with a Cigar, outside of smoking it, but Chew it or put it in Blankets to Keep Out the Chills. O. H. simply couldn't chew and his Blankets belonged to the Landlady.

So— Well, just then he had an Idea. Fine! He'd show 'em! Why, he hadn't even Begun to Fight! He was Game, and he meant to Take Everything Coming his Way.

He sat down and Figured Out the exact number of days before New Year's. Then he Divided his Cigars into sections, sending some into the First Line Trenches, others into the Second Line, holding still others as a Reserve; and the Hiemander he decreed should be Shot as Spies on New Year Eve.

Then he began the Slaughter. The first day he "Done his Duty as he Seen It." And the Allotted Number

of cheroots Went Up in Smoke.

The next day, though he felt a little Too Proud to Fight, he cut loose with the Machine Guns and Extinguished the last of the Picked Victims for that day just before he Turned Out the light and Pulled the Covers over his Head.

From then on his Battling Average Fell.

But when the Evening of the Last Day of the Dying Year rolled round, he was still At It. He had about concluded that this business of New Year Resolutions was all b. s.—meaning Bird Seed; but he was Going to Die Game. It would be a Long Time, etc., as the Governor of North Carolina said to the Gov'nor of S. C.

So, with what was left, he Sat Down in his Room and tried to Consume them, one eye on the clock. It was Strictly a Watch-night Affair.

Presently, as the Fatal Hour drew near, he began to Enjoy Them.

Already he had Smoked himself Black in the Face, and he knew he couldn't get any Blacker.

Then—the Hour Struck and the Whistles whistled.

He hurled his Lady Nicotine out the Window and—

—There were still a Few Dozen left. Moral:—Though it sometimes works in Mysterious Ways, there does seem to be some sort of a Providence that looks out for Janitors, Mail Carriers, Elevator Boys, Street Car Conductors and Friends who smoke Cigars.



As the Fatal Hour drew near, he began to Enjoy Them.